

[Winter's Chill](#) by [Luddleston](#)

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Summary:

Trevelyan may have lived through Ferelden winters all her life, but nothing could have prepared her for the chill of the Emprise.

Cassandra and the Inquisitor are snowed in, and that seems like the perfect time to have a discussion about sexuality.

Winter's Chill

Author's Note:

- For [lemonsharks](#).

Ok this is the first time I've ever done a fic exchange but seriously it was SO FUN.

And I wish I could've written more but then I had to leave the country (I'm going on vacation). To lemonsharks, I hope you enjoy this a lot! To everyone else, I hope you appreciate my continued attempts to write more ladysmut.

Trevelyan may have lived through Ferelden winters all her life, but nothing could have prepared her for the chill of the Emprise. She had half a mind to join Dorian in his whining (but that meant Bull would probably offer to warm her up, and Cassandra would start glaring at them because, for whatever reason, she always got annoyed when the Inquisitor and Bull started throwing innuendo back and forth).

And, frigid as it was, a blizzard made everything worse. Not the cold in particular—once their tents were buried, it actually insulated them quite well—but there was no way she and Cassandra could dig their way out, lest they abandon themselves to the howling wind.

They were well-supplied and kept-up on the protocol for these things (“Wait it out if you can, don’t try to use magic to melt the snow because it just causes flooding, try not to lose your mind,” Harding had said). The last item on the list was the hardest, Trevelyan thought.

She spent the first hour or so sharpening her weapons, but when her axe, daggers, and the assortment of smaller knives she carried were all as deadly as could be, she dropped her whetstone and laid back on her bedroll to sigh.

“How long do you think this’ll last?” she asked Cassandra, who sat a few feet away, reading, the light from a candle she’d lit making the scar on her

cheek stand out. Her cheekbones looked sharper than usual and her lips softer in candlelight. Trevelyan thought about running her thumb along the lower one, tipping Cass's face up to hers (which was ridiculous, because she was shorter than Cassandra) and lowering her own lips to Cassandra's perfect, glossy, red ones, and—shit.

She really shouldn't've been thinking about that.

"I do not know," Cassandra replied. She didn't even *look* when she said it. Maybe that wasn't so bad—she didn't see Trevelyan blush, at least.

Getting stuck in a blizzard was one thing. Getting stuck in a blizzard with the woman she'd been basically in love with for the past half a year was another entirely, and Trevelyan wasn't sure she'd get out of it alive. Corephus had nothing on the absolute torture of watching the curve of Cass's arm shift every time she turned a page, strong, slim fingers holding thin paper so delicately.

She thought about asking Cassandra if she could do her the honor of sharpening her longsword while she was at it, but she wasn't sure she'd be able to handle Cassandra telling her not to. Oh, was she ever hopeless.

"What are you reading?" she said when the silence got too lengthy and awkward.

Cassandra paused for a long time before answering. "It's one of Varric's," she finally said, her face screwing up in that look of distaste it always did when she thought about him, like she didn't want Trevelyan to know she read his books, even though she'd already caught her doing it and asked Varric to write her more. He'd told her it wasn't going to win her Cassandra's heart, but she could hope.

"Any good?" She sat up so she could see Cassandra's face better.

"I think it is," Cassandra said, smiling a little down at the pages. "But I shall have to stop reading soon. I don't want to use up the last of the candle for this silly thing."

“It’s not silly if it passes the time,” Trevelyan said. “Anything to keep from going stir-crazy in this storm.”

“Somehow, I feel that will be more your concern. I am used to long days of emptiness. My vigil, as part of the Seekers—“ she frowned. “Well. I am focused, to say the least.”

“Are you saying I’m unfocused?”

“Oh! No, of course not!” Cassandra snapped the book shut with one hand, held the other out as if to placate her Inquisitor.

Trevelyan laughed. “It’s fine, Cassandra. You’re not wrong.”

“Forgive me,” Cassandra said, looking down at the cover of the book on her lap.

“Absolutely,” she replied.

They sat in silence for a while longer, just barely able to hear the howl of the wind over the snow piled up over the top of their tent. Cassandra reopened the book and continued to read a few pages, and Trevelyan sat back and pretended not to be watching her, but she couldn’t keep from staring at the way Cassandra’s thick eyelashes fluttered as her gaze followed each line like she hadn’t read it a dozen times before. At least she was focused enough on the book that she (hopefully) wouldn’t notice Trevelyan watching her.

“It’s getting colder,” Trevelyan noted, as Cassandra put the book down and made to move for the candle.

“We must truly be nearing evening,” Cassandra said.

“Evening, morning, it’s always cold here.” Trevelyan set her little pile of weapons at a distance where neither of them would roll into a dagger in their sleep. Not that it had ever happened before, but what a way to go.

“True.” Cassandra extinguished the candle, and for a moment, Trevelyan couldn’t see enough to distinguish her own hand from the surrounding

darkness.

“Shit, this is worse than that cave on the Storm Coast,” she remarked, hands out a few inches in front of her, trying to anticipate any movement in the darkness.

“Less spiders,” Cassandra said, and her voice sounded nearer than before.

Trevelyan moved across the tent on her knees, trying to find her way to her bedroll—it shouldn’t be that hard, it was a tiny tent, and she was sitting nearly in the middle of it—but she found Cassandra instead.

“Oh. Um. Are you?” She hadn’t removed her hands from Cassandra’s back. She should have done that sooner. That would be the thing a normal human being who didn’t have a ridiculous crush would do. She did not do that.

“Inquisitor?”

“I’m sorry. I couldn’t see,” she elaborated, finally taking her hands back and tucking them in her lap where they couldn’t do any more damage.

She could only imagine Cassandra’s curt nod when she replied, “I understand. Wait until your eyes adjust to the darkness, would you?”

Eventually, she was able to see a faint difference between the slightly-uneven ends of Cassandra’s short hair and the nape of her neck, and the line of her shirt. She could also see her bedroll, but, much as she enjoyed that sight after a long day of fighting demons and closing rifts, it was decidedly less interesting right now.

Oh, Maker, was she in deep.

Trevelyan buried herself in all the blankets she could, wrapped them tight around herself and pulled them up to her ears, but nothing helped stem the cold that seeped in from every side of the tent. With no fire and not even a candle lit, the snow went from comfortable insulation to radiating cold, and Trevelyan wished, not for the first time, that she’d gotten stuck in a tent with Dorian. At least he was a mage, and not an attractive woman.

Cassandra must have heard her teeth chattering, because she sighed and Trevelyan heard her rolling over, assumedly to face her, but she did not dare to look. “We are going to freeze to death like this,” she said.

“An irony I’m sure Corephyus would appreciate. It would make a silly tale of the Inquisition if I died in a snowstorm,” Trevelyan said. She did not mention that she had already survived one, much worse snowstorm, and did not think she would be laid low by this one.

“Your scouts advised that if we became trapped in a snowstorm, we should —“

Yes, yes, strip down, share the same bedroll, pile the blankets over top and hope that when someone comes to dig you out, they don’t find you naked and admiring the musculature of the Right Hand of the Divine. “Fine.”

The chill became worse than just a nuisance while she pulled her heavy tunic off over her head and did the same with her leggings (socks stayed on, though, she liked all her toes where they belonged and not frostbitten off). Cassandra repeated her actions, and Trevelyan tried not to look at the curve of her shoulder or the network of scars on her back, or the corded muscles on her thighs. “We... *are* keeping our under-layers on, right?” *For the love of the Maker, please say yes, lest I heat this entire tent with the force of my blushing.*

“Oh. I was going to, yes,” Cassandra said.

She tried not to breathe a sigh of relief. She failed, hoped it sounded enough like an ordinary exhale.

Trevelyan froze while Cassandra nudged their bedrolls together and gathered the blankets from both, spreading them over their laps. They sat close enough that their thighs pressed together.

This was how it was going to end for her, Trevelyan thought, pulling the blankets up past her bare shoulders. Naked except for her smallclothes and socks, side-by-side with Cassandra, who was only in leggings. It was still chilly, less so when Cassandra rolled onto her side and *oh, Andraste’s ass,*

actually wrapped an arm around Trevelyan's ribcage, urging her to turn onto her side as well, and...

And they were spooning. Both bare from the waist up, wrapped in two layers of blankets, her head coming close to resting on Cassandra's bicep. Highly unprofessional, but absolutely perfect. Trevelyan may have fit just this well into someone's arms before, but she couldn't remember now, not with one of Cassandra's hands resting gently on her ribcage, just below her breast, not when she could feel Cass's clothed thighs on her bare ones.

"Is this any warmer, Inquisitor?" Cassandra asked.

"Yes," she said, and it came out a little breathier than it should have. She cleared her throat. "It really does work, I guess." Though, she might have just been feeling warm down to her toes because she could feel Cassandra's breath on the nape of her neck.

They were silent for a while, and Trevelyan tried to distract herself by matching her breathing to Cassandra's. *Breathe slower*, she told herself, *stop panicking. She'll notice if you're panting like you just fought three pride demons at once.* She could feel the tiny movements of Cassandra's hand against her body, nearly startled herself into going completely tense when Cass readjusted herself a little.

"May I ask something?" Cassandra said suddenly, and Trevelyan rolled onto her back so she could see Cassandra's face.

"Yeah?" Her heart was beginning to pound already. She could only imagine the worst—Cassandra had already told her the flirting made her uncomfortable, how much more uncomfortable would this be for her?

"You are attracted to women, right?" Cassandra's hand was still solid on her stomach, and she was propped up a little on her opposite elbow.

"Ye-es?"

"How... did you know?"

She could still feel Cassandra breathing, faster now than when she was trying to fall asleep. “I... well, I don’t think it was any specific moment,” she said. When she moved closer to Cassandra, she told herself it was just because of the heat radiating from her skin. “It’s one of those things that has just always *been*.”

“I think I understand,” Cassandra said. “I just... had been wondering if perhaps, there was a specific instance, or, or *person* who... instigated these feelings.”

“I don’t...” She thought about summers back in her family’s home in Ostwick, of sneaking out at night with that girl with the pretty braids and her first kiss under the twisting apple trees in the orchard. She thought about the first time she felt under another girl’s skirt, and later, when she let that dark-eyed beauty undo the buttons on her dress. “I guess it just kind of *happened*. Teenage exploration, and all that.”

“Do you think, perhaps, it’s always something you know all your life?” Cassandra asked it almost hesitantly, refusing to meet Trevelyan’s eyes.

“I think it is for some people, but it’s not always,” she said. “Cassandra, why are you asking this?”

“Oh, well, I have a friend who is, well, experiencing something like this for the first time. I thought perhaps I’d ask you since I knew you... well, have... prior... never mind.” Cassandra huffed out a breath, making her fringe blow away from her forehead.

Trevelyan rolled onto her stomach and folded her arms under herself. Things were beginning to get suspicious. Or perhaps, they’d been suspicious all along; she was just disinclined to suspect Cassandra would ask her questions with an underlying purpose. “Cassandra. I know all your friends. And I know you wouldn’t field questions about sex for any of them. What is this really about?”

Cass laid back, shoving her hands over her eyes. The blankets slipped down a little, and Trevelyan tried hard not to stare at her chest. “I fear I may have said something to you that I should not have.”

If she laid her head on her arms and tipped her face to the side, she could see the lines of Cassandra's profile standing out from the surrounding darkness. They shifted as Cassandra turned her head to look at Trevelyan. Their faces were so close, if Trevelyan tipped her chin up a few inches, they could have been kissing.

This was no time to be thinking that, though. "Are you alright?"

"You remember when I spoke to you about the way you occasionally flirt with me?"

Of course she remembered; it wasn't easy to forget the crushing disappointment that came with hearing that the woman she was in love with could not return her feelings. She just said, "yes."

"I begin to wonder if I should not have rejected you the way that I did," Cassandra said.

"If you think you were too harsh, you shouldn't worry. I'm fine," she lied. If she were fine, she wouldn't have been spiraling into heart-pounding, mouth-drying anxiety every time Cassandra's arm brushed against her bare ribs.

She felt Cassandra sigh, her breath on the side of Trevelyan's arm. "When I was part of the Seekers, I knew women like you, who took other women as their lovers. None of them appealed to me, but then again, it's not as though I have much... experience with men, either. I have feelings—for you—which I cannot explain, other than—" and she was sure, here, she would have seen Cassandra blush if it were lighter, "—than that they are romantic in nature."

And here, Trevelyan's mind went spiraling out of control, beginning with wanting to help Cassandra through her confusion and ending with *she might be in love with me*. It took her a long moment to find words again, and when she did, they were barely comprehensible. "Are you saying... with me?"

Cassandra let out a high, nervous laugh that Trevelyan had never heard. “I wonder if this would be any easier if you were a man,” she said.

“I think a lot of things would be easier if I were a man,” Trevelyan said, “particularly getting up to piss in a few hours.” Cassandra honest-to-Maker *giggled* in response, and Trevelyan tipped her face into the crook of her arm so Cassandra wouldn’t see the love-struck smile on her face.

“Would this be one of them?”

“Maybe,” Trevelyan said, “but maybe it doesn’t have to be hard the way it is.”

“I suppose life in the Inquisition is difficult enough already without bringing feelings into the equation,” Cassandra said, and she shifted onto her side, looping her arm around Trevelyan’s waist again. The touch felt more confident this time, just as gentle but without hesitation.

“I don’t regret the feelings, though.”

“Even though I rejected them?” Cassandra asked, her thumb stroking along a scar on Trevelyan’s ribs.

“Not for an instant.”

Cassandra’s voice was thick when she spoke again, like she wanted to cry or to hold her close. “How long?”

“Hm?”

Her arm tightened around Trevelyan’s waist, and, in return, Trevelyan brushed her fingers along the fringe of hair falling over Cassandra’s ear. “How long have you had feelings for me?”

She watched her breath ruffle Cassandra’s hair, following the path her fingers just had. “Damn. I don’t know. I mean, it wasn’t like I was head-over-heels when you had me in chains.”

“I should think not. That seems to be more Bull’s thing,” Cassandra said, and Trevelyan laughed, wanted desperately to hold her close. She untucked one arm from under herself, put it around Cassandra’s waist, until they were almost chest-to-chest, her knees bumping Cassandra’s.

“I think it was that first conversation we had in Haven,” Trevelyan said, “when you asked me if you did the right thing by saving me.” She remembered vividly the way the sun had looked on that day, turning the gates to Haven’s now-ruined fortress gold, making Cassandra’s skin look warm even in the chill of a Ferelden winter. The light had shone through her eyes and turned them a brilliant amber. “That was when I realized how much thought you put into everything you do. And how beautiful you are.”

Cassandra’s chin tipped down like it was trying to meet her collarbone, and even though she couldn’t really feel it, Trevelyan imagined the heat of her blush made the temperature of the air between them rise. “The things you say,” she said quietly, fingers shaking just the smallest bit on Trevelyan’s back. “Inquisitor?”

“I think we’re past formal titles,” she said.

“Ah. I suppose we are.” Cassandra was close enough that when she tilted her head, her cheek brushed Trevelyan’s shoulder. “I... do you... want this? Do you want to be with me?”

Of course I want this, she thought. “Only if you do,” she said.

“I must admit, I... I know how badly things can end,” Cassandra said. She leaned closer until her forehead nudged against Trevelyan’s. They were close enough to breathe the same air. “And I don’t want a bad ending with you.”

“This isn’t an ending, though,” Trevelyan said. Every nerve in her body was shouting *just kiss me*, but she kept herself still except for the hand rubbing Cassandra’s back.

“Would you...?” Cassandra trailed off, the hand she had pressed between them coming up to rest on her on Trevelyan’s collarbone. It was then that

Trevelyan realized Cassandra was asking her to make the first move. She shifted closer, let her hand drift to the center of Cassandra's back, and tilted her chin up until her lips were nearly on Cassandra's, giving her every opportunity to break her heart again. She would allow it if Cassandra needed to move away—she had to.

Cassandra didn't pull back, didn't begin a long, flustered rant about Trevelyan being her superior and a woman, and Trevelyan realized she had to stop comparing this to her conversation with Cassandra on the battlements when Cass returned the gesture and their lips finally, *finally* pressed together.

Cassandra's lips were warm, as soft as Trevelyan had been imagining (she *must* have put something on them to keep them from getting chapped by the relentless wind in the Emprise), and when Trevelyan nudged the kiss to the side of more firm, Cassandra wiggled closer until they were pressed chest-to-chest, except for Cassandra's hand wedged between them.

She gripped the back of Trevelyan's thigh with the other hand, pulling her until she was straddling Cassandra's waist, and she paused for a moment, breathing hard. "You're okay with this?" she asked.

"Believe me, I would tell you if I were not," Cassandra replied, her hand so gentle on Trevelyan's neck as she pulled her down for another kiss. This one was more enthusiastic than the last, sloppy enough to tell Trevelyan that Cassandra hadn't kissed this way very often. She could feel Cassandra's every movement under her, from the clench in her abs to the long drag when she stretched. She stroked Cassandra's cheek with one of her thumbs and felt Cass gasp, then took the opportunity to nip her lower lip. Cassandra moaned underneath her and laid her hands on Trevelyan's waist.

The air in the tent was freezing on the back of her neck, but Cassandra's lips were hot against her, and just as warm as she kissed down Trevelyan's neck. The wet kiss marks chilled immediately, a striking contrast to the heat of Cassandra's hands creeping up from her waist to her breasts. Trevelyan moaned and pressed her temple to Cassandra's as Cass groped her. "*Maker, Cassandra,*" she breathed, hips stuttering against Cassandra's. She slipped

her thigh between Cassandra's and gasped at how the heat of her intensified there.

She could feel Cassandra rubbing against her and she shifted her thigh so she could press more firmly against Cassandra's crotch. Cass let out a half-gasp, half-yelp, and her fingers dug hard into Trevelyan's sides. She pressed her face into Trevelyan's neck, and the way her back bowed put space between Trevelyan's thigh and Cassandra's body.

Trevelyan stopped moving for a moment, resting against Cassandra. "Do you... I mean... how far is this going?" she asked, breathless. Cassandra's hands snaked around her back so she could hold her close, and the feeling of Cassandra's breasts against hers almost made her want to stop talking and kiss her again.

"I... am not sure," Cassandra said. "I want to keep going, but if you... I mean, if this is going to make you uncomfortable, we can stop."

"Oh," Trevelyan said, the breath gone from her lungs, "oh, Maker, no, it doesn't make me *uncomfortable*, I just wanted to know whether *you* were okay."

"More than," Cassandra said, leaning her forehead against Trevelyan's. "I would like to kiss you again."

"And I'd like to get you out of your smallclothes; which of those is happening first?"

Cassandra chuckled, tucking her chin down to kiss Trevelyan's neck again. "I don't actually wear them," she said.

"Shit, really? I thought you were just messing with Sera when you said that," Trevelyan replied. Cassandra nudged her off so they could lay side-by-side, and Trevelyan may not have been able to see past the blankets covering them, but she knew Cassandra was shimmying out of her leggings. Trevelyan toed her socks off and left little kisses on Cassandra's forehead and cheeks, keeping her hands chastely on Cassandra's shoulders until Cassandra took one of them in hers and moved them to her breasts.

Trevelyan knew what to do here, and she teased Cassandra's tits, rubbing her nipples with her thumbs and lightly stroking the swell of them. She and Cassandra breathed into the tiny space between them, and her hips shifted closer to Cassandra's, felt hesitant fingers tracing the length of her back. Cassandra's kisses had almost turned shy as she pulled Trevelyan closer to her until their bodies were pressed flush, Cassandra's ankles hooked around hers.

"I feel woefully inexperienced," Cassandra said, her hand resting lightly on Trevelyan's hip.

Trevelyan, by some blessing of Andraste, didn't tell Cassandra that her experience didn't matter, or that she'd probably be able to get off just by kissing her, or that she'd never thought she'd so much as get Cassandra to look her way with something less than malice, much less have her biting her lower lip and sliding her palm up her thigh.

"It's okay," she said instead, "I might know a few things."

"Good," Cassandra replied, giggling and running her thumb along the seam where Trevelyan's thigh met her hip. "What do you like?"

"I like *you*," she sighed, unable to stop herself. She canted her hips down and she could almost, *almost* rub herself against Cassandra's hand.

"That's unhelpful." Cassandra smiled as she said it, and Trevelyan couldn't help but repeat the motion, then press their smiles together. Cassandra turned her hand so she could flatten her palm over Trevelyan's pubic bone, fingers curling up just at the center of her, and sure, she was still wearing her smalls, but she felt it enough to make her shiver. "Is this alright?" Cassandra asked.

"It's good," Trevelyan said back. It would be better if she were naked, but she didn't give a damn right now, she just rolled her hips down until she could feel Cassandra's fingers closer against her. And oh, Cassandra responded beautifully, rubbing Trevelyan's clit with her thumb, the friction good enough to have her making soft, breathy little noises that Cassandra just swallowed up, her mouth pressed intermittently to Trevelyan's.

They moved together like that for a few long moments, until it became too much and not enough all at once, and Trevelyan wrapped a hand around Cassandra's wrist, guiding her fingers below the waistband of her smalls. She put her hand on Cass's hips, tugging her closer until she could fit her knee between Cassandra's thighs.

They brought each other off like this: Cassandra's fingers tracing sloppy circles over her, feeling out her clit in a way that made Trevelyan wonder if this was how Cassandra touched herself, one of her thighs shoved between Cassandra's legs. Cass rubbed against her like she couldn't get enough, any nervousness or hesitation from earlier gone in the wake of her pleasure.

Trevelyan knew she was going to come first. She'd known it since Cassandra started to kiss her with intent that went beyond shy experimenting. Still, she knew she was physically and mentally exhausted enough that she wasn't going to be up for round two (at least not right away), so she tried to string things out as long as she could.

Tried.

And failed, as soon as Cassandra pressed her face into her neck and she found herself able not only to hear her muffled moans, but feel them reverberate against her skin. The fingers flexing against her clit only helped the oncoming wave of pleasure break faster, and in the aftermath of her orgasm, Trevelyan found herself pulling Cassandra closer to her, so their arms were around each other and their bodies pressed tight together.

She kissed Cassandra slowly as she tipped them so Cass was on her back, knelt in the place Cassandra's spread legs left for her. She fit perfectly between them, rested a hand on one scarred knee while she reached between her legs with the other.

She smiled to herself when she realized this was the only place on Cassandra that was softer than her lips.

Trevelyan could feel Cassandra's orgasm in her thighs before she heard her scream (just the once, high and only a little breathy, so close to her battle cry it was going to make the next demon horde they faced *very* interesting).

She settled her weight onto Cassandra after, kissed her on the lips and nose, felt strong arms come to wrap around her waist.

“That was...” Cassandra began, but then she stopped and shook her head, at a loss for words.

“I know,” Trevelyan replied, because *damn*, if there never was another first time for her, she’d be okay with that, because this one was beyond what she’d ever thought a first time could be. Maybe this was what it was supposed to be like, she thought, leaning in for another kiss.

She couldn’t even find it in herself to be annoyed when the soldiers came to dig them out the next morning and spluttered incoherently when they found their Inquisitor and the Right Hand of the Divine cuddling.

Author's Note:

Visit me on tumblr @weezna or on my NSFW tumblr @seldula for more dragon age, seriously, it's like all dragon age right now, I have a problem.